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## Carroll County Composting Pilot

*Co-composting, the mixing of biosolids with residential yard waste, has become an option that nearly all of the Authority's member jurisdictions have been exploring. However, in December 2000, Carroll County officials took their interest in co-composting a step further by asking the Authority to develop a protocol for a co-composting pilot project. The pilot has been in operation since last November and county officials are already encouraged by the results. Here's how the experimental project came about:*

In response to Carroll County's request for a protocol to co-compost biosolids (sewage sludge) with residential yard waste collected at the Northern Landfill, the Authority, with help from David Hill, project manager for the Baltimore City Composting Facility, prepared and submitted a protocol. The proposal outlined how to construct and manage compost piles, including recommendations on ingredient ratios, mixing, turning, recording temperature readings and total process and curing times.

The Authority arranged for Carroll County officials to tour the Kent Island Wastewater Treatment Facility where biosolids are com-



posted with wood chips in aerated static piles. And, the Authority hosted a one-day co-composting class led by Dr. Eliot Epstein, a

*(continued on back page)*

## City of Baltimore Has New Truck Wash Facilities

In the spring of 2001, the Authority procured Allied Contractors, Inc. to construct two truck wash facilities for the City of Baltimore. Construction was completed in November 2001. One truck wash facility was constructed at the city's Sisson Street yard, and the other at the Bowley's Lane Yard. Each truck wash consists of a concrete pad with a drain to an oil-water separator and a pressure washer. The facilities are the first of their kind used by the Bureau of Solid Waste for washing rear and front-end load packers, street sweepers and other city fleet vehicles. City personnel were trained on the truck wash equipment in December 2001 and the facility was fully operational by January 2002. For additional information regarding this project, please contact Laura Thomson at the Authority (lthomson@nmwda.org).



## Did You Know?

Excerpt from *Environmental Science News*, January 2002:

"Incineration under environmentally sound conditions with energy recovery is the preferred option for managing solid waste," according to the Technical Working Group of the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal. The group issued technical guidelines for the environmentally sound waste management of plastics. Modern waste-to-energy technology should be the preferred option compared to other management options.

# New York City's Solid Waste Dilemma

Established in 1948, Fresh Kills is the largest landfill in the world. Situated on 3,000 acres on Staten Island, the landfill, when open, accepted 14,000 tons of New York City waste per day. At 450 feet high, the landfill is one of the highest points on the east coast, 25 feet higher than the Statue of Liberty. If it were any higher it would hinder air traffic. Fresh Kills emits 2,650 tons of methane gas daily, which accounts for nearly six percent of total methane emissions in the United States.

In May 1996, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Governor George Pataki agreed to close the Fresh Kills landfill by 2001. In March of that year, they delivered on their promise and the Fresh Kills Landfill was closed.

Closing Fresh Kills offered many environmental advantages. However, New York City's short-term waste management plan is creating other environmental problems. Today, what Governor Pataki once touted as "a new era of environmental restoration for Staten Island and the entire city," has become nothing short of a garbage crisis for all of New York City. The city is now forced to export all of its waste, mostly by trucks, to Pennsylvania and Virginia at cost of 50 percent more than disposal at Fresh Kills. The increased truck traffic adds to air pollution and thoroughfare litter.

Originally, the city had planned to transport waste by rail and barge to a proposed transfer station in Linden, New Jersey. One year after closing the Fresh Kills Landfill, the city's plans for the waste transfer station have been abandoned. City officials have started the planning process over and are considering waste-to-energy as a viable option. In the meantime, without a landfill, New York City has few options for ridding itself of its waste. The city can attempt to reduce waste and increase recycling. They could site a new landfill or waste-to-energy facility within New York State. Or, they can continue to export all of the city's waste. Exporting waste, though, is very expensive and inefficient. Many states have been pushing Congress to allow states the right to regulate and restrict waste importing. The less popular option is to reopen the Fresh Kills Landfill while sanitation officials and consultants work on a realistic plan. The landfill still has 20 to 30 years of life remaining. How the city decides to manage its waste until a new plan is implemented is relevant to not only New York City residents, but to neighboring states as well. ❖



## USFilter Award Banquet



Each year, USFilter honors one of its own facilities for operational excellence. At an awards ceremony held on March 16, the 2001 *USFilter Operational Excellence Award* went to the Baltimore City Compost Facility. Members of the Authority staff attended the awards banquet to honor the management and staff who operate the facility. The Compost Facility was recognized for its achievements in operational excellence based on safety and regulatory compliance as well as financial performance.

*Mark Saunders (center), Division Manager for USFilter Operating Services and David Hill (front left), Project Manager for the Baltimore City Compost Facility present individual achievement awards to employees of the Baltimore City Compost Facility.*

# Work Group Examines Annual Recycling Report Process

Clif Dowling, the Authority's Commercial Recycling Specialist, has been working with a group formed last year to review the process by which Maryland counties and Baltimore City annually report to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) on the success of their recycling programs. The work group has examined how each jurisdiction collects data about the amount of waste being recycled per year.

The current process begins in January of each year, when the Planning and Recycling Division of MDE sends a request to all of the recycling processors listed on a database maintained by the Authority. (You can find this database presented as a recycling businesses directory on the Authority's recycling website, [www.mdrecycles.org](http://www.mdrecycles.org).) The letter explains that the Maryland Recycling Act (MRA) of 1988 requires each jurisdiction in Maryland to report the tonnages of recyclable materials that were actually recycled in the jurisdiction during the preceding year. A standard report form and instructions accompany the request letter. Recycling processors are asked to indicate how much recyclable material they collected from each jurisdiction. The completed forms are then returned to local recycling offices for consolidation into an annual report to MDE.


The final reports from local recycling offices present each jurisdiction's recycling rates as a percentage of the total municipal solid waste stream. This is important because the MRA mandated that each jurisdiction in the state with a population of over 150,000 must recycle at least 20 percent of its solid waste stream. A jurisdiction with a population of less than 150,000 is required to recycle at least 15 percent of its solid waste stream. Last year's reports indicated that Maryland counties averaged a 38 percent diversion rate for calendar year 2000. While every jurisdiction has exceeded their mandate, they are constantly striving to recycle even more.

There are several limiting factors associated with the reporting process described above. To begin with, processors are asked to report on a strictly voluntary basis. Consequently, many do not report. The work group has tried to make the report form user-friendlier, so that more processors will respond. They also reworked the cover letter, the instructions and the reporting form.

Another problem is that many times out-of-state processors know the towns that recyclables


are collected from, but do not know the county. Mr. Dowling suggested that an alphabetical list of all Maryland post offices, with their corresponding zip codes and counties, be included in the request packages mailed to the processors. This was done for the first time in 2002.

Two years ago, Mr. Dowling offered to help local recycling offices, within the Authority's member jurisdictions, prepare their annual reports by contacting some of the larger chain-store companies and other organizations with stores or operations located in the jurisdictions. It made sense for the people responsible for recycling in the contacted organizations to get one request for information, rather than requests from each individual recycling office. It soon became clear that one of the reasons some processors were not responding to the MDE request for tonnage reports was because they didn't even know which state the materials originated from, let alone the county. Many of the big box stores back-haul recyclables to a regional distribution center where they are consolidated and marketed. A distribution center may be located out of state and may in turn market the recyclables to processors who also are out of state. The processor knows only the location of the distribution center, so it is futile to ask him or her to report to individual counties. Only by contacting the individual generators can these otherwise "invisible" recycling efforts be documented.

Mr. Dowling has recommended creating a clearinghouse for collecting annual tonnage reports from the big generators of recyclable materials. Many of the contacts ultimately developed for some of the large generators have said that they receive dozens of requests for recycling information from many jurisdictions in Maryland and surrounding states. A central clearinghouse serving as a single point of contact for an entire state would greatly facilitate their efforts to respond in a timely fashion. The efforts of the MRA work group indicate that there is still a lot to be learned about the market dynamics of the recycling industry. Only by developing a more sophisticated and comprehensive approach to the reporting process will we be able to more accurately track and document the amount of recycling actually being accomplished in Maryland. 

## Sweden Municipalities Gearing Up to Burn More & Landfill Less

Swedish municipalities are gearing up for a massive increase in biological processing and combustion of municipal solid waste (MSW) due to a recent ban on landfilling combustible waste. This move will result in Sweden landfilling a smaller proportion of its waste than any other European nation; leapfrogging the Netherlands, Denmark and Switzerland. The new ban was proposed in 1997 and covers virtually all household discards.

Sweden already landfills just under 25 percent of its MSW. This figure should fall as low as 5-10 percent within three years according to the Swedish EPA. Municipalities have already cut landfilling by 37 percent since 1994. However, the ban cannot be fulfilled without increased treatment capacity. The plans of local municipalities point to a boom in biological treatment of source separated organics. Current capacity is less than 400,000 metric tons-per-year, but is expected to more than double by 2010. Current waste-to-energy capacity for household waste is 1.5 million metric tons-per-year and is also expected to increase. 

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## Upcoming Events:



May 30-31, 2002  
**14th Annual Maryland  
 Recyclers Coalition Conference**  
 Catonsville, Maryland  
 or visit  
[www.marylandrecyclers.org](http://www.marylandrecyclers.org)



June 8, 2002  
**Mid-Atlantic Chapter SWANA  
 Annual Crab Feast**  
 For more information contact  
 Martin Sanford  
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## Carroll County Composting Pilot (continued from page 1)

national composting expert. Representatives from nearly all of the Authority's member jurisdictions attended the class.

County officials submitted the pertinent documentation and permit applications for conducting a six-month pilot to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). By October 2001, the county received all permits and authorization from MDE to proceed with the co-composting pilot. The county constructed the first windrow under the pilot on November 19, 2001.

By the end of February, Carroll County had diverted 272 tons of biosolids from the Northern Landfill, which was mixed and composted with 653 cubic yards of yard waste. The superintendent and assistant superintendent of the Northern Landfill manage the composting pilot project. Their responsibilities include mixing the biosolids and yard waste, constructing the windrows, turning the windrows, and taking and recording temperatures daily. They estimate that an average of 3.5 hours per week are spent managing the compost operation.

This type of pilot project offers the county a chance to assess existing staff capabilities for testing, documenting and managing a full compost operation. It also allows the county to test



for any possible odor or dust control issues and to predict potential end product market value, based on lab analysis and overall appearance.

Earlier this year, Authority staff met with Gary Horst, enterprise and recreation services director for Carroll County and Vinnie Legge, recycling manager for the county, at the pilot project site for a progress report. "I am tremendously encouraged by the results of the operation," said Gary Horst. "The process has been easier than any of us anticipated and the product looks very good. Laboratory testing was recently completed with successful results. County officials will meet with MDE to request permission to move beyond the pilot project status."

For more information on co-composting please call Tracie Reynolds at the Authority at 410-333-2730.



# WASTEWATCH

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*Wastewatch* is published quarterly by the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority, an independent agency of the State of Maryland governed by its Member jurisdictions — Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Harford County, Howard County and Montgomery County.

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